

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-2
December 11, 2012
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Felix Pardo, Coral Gables Resident and Architect

Tim Plummer, Coral Gables Resident and Traffic Engineer

F-2 [Start: 1:20:07 p.m.]

Discussion regarding LeJeune Road Median Beautification Project
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.

Mayor Cason: The next item will be F-2, which is...

Commissioner Cabrera: It’s my discussion item regarding the LeJeune Road Median Beautification Project; and let me start off by saying this project has been reviewed by this Commission on two separate occasions. It was first reviewed in December of 2011, and then it was approved recently in November of 2012. I have a series of notes in front of me, so please bare with me because I need to refresh my memory based upon my notes; but let me take you back, and first let me state what this is, and by all means if I misspeak or misrepresent this project I’m sure staff will correct me. This is a beautification project consisting of 12 islands in the middle of LeJeune Road between Altara, which is near Coral Gables High School, and

Mendoza, further north. That stretch of LeJeune Road is approximately 30 blocks and this project consist of the installation of 12 islands on the chevron, and I use the word chevron, the painted surfaces in the middle of LeJeune Road or on the median of LeJeune Road; and the project consist of curbing those islands, it consist of landscaping them and then irrigating them, and I'm assuming that after that maintenance will be part of it. As I said earlier, the project was initially presented to the five of us on December 13, 2011, and it was part of a project that included two other projects. What we did on that day was we amended the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Annual Budget and we authorized a transfer of funds, the Commission authorized a transfer of funds from the General Fund Reserve into the General Improvement Capital Projects Fund, and we authorized the appropriation of funds for certain landscaping streetscape improvements and that included the LeJeune Road improvement. At that time when the City Commission looked at this project there were no design elements; when the Commission saw it, it had a cost of approximately \$220,000 attached to it, and please keep in mind we transfer funds from General Reserves so we can do this. We never saw the project again. The project came back to us last month on November 13th and it happened to be on the Commission's Consent Agenda. I purposely, when the Consent Agenda was read by the City Clerk asking if there was anyone wishing to pull the Consent Agenda, I purposely waited to see if any of you would be interested in discussing this project because I thought it was a fairly large magnitude project. When I saw there was no real appetite to discuss it, I went ahead and pulled it. So what we did then was, it was a resolution accepting the recommendation of the Procurement Department to award the LeJeune Road Median Project to a contractor and authorizing a budget amendment of the Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Annual Budget and to recognize as revenue of \$108,421 to transfer from General Fund Reserves to go into the project. So in essence what we did was the project was originally approximately cost \$220,000, that approximate number wasn't accurate enough, so we had to find \$108,000 more. So let me make sure we all understand, this project is being funded with General Reserves, OK, let's be clear on that. Incidentally, I forgot to say this, I was not on the prevailing side on November 13th, so I'm only discussing it, unless one of my three colleagues to my left is willing to bring this matter back up again for rediscussion, it doesn't get reconsidered. So, I realize that this is just for discussion purposes; however, back in December, excuse me, back in November my initial comment was that this project lacked a true public process, and it was not properly vetted. I happen to ask the City Manager that day, and it's reflected in the minutes, why he had not included the cost of the project in the Fiscal 2012-2013 year, and he indicated that last July he did not have a cost for it, but he did have a cost for it in December 2011, it just wasn't the right cost because it was much lower. During that meeting I requested to see a copy of the plans, I think we had a small deferral, we got an eight and-a-half by fourteen document four color that showed 3 blocks of a 30 block project; and I don't know why, but in my heart of hearts I think some of you have seen the full design, that's just in my heart of hearts, I'm not trying to be argumentative about it, that's not my goal here, maybe it's

happened you have a better – Mr. Manager, I realize you are not speaking, but your non-verbals are shouting at me.

City Manager Salerno: OK.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK – would you cut it out? Anyway, as I was saying, you may have seen it, you may not have seen it, the Manager is feverishly, I don't know if it's a tick or if he is actually going like this, obviously he doesn't feel that you saw it and that's perfectly fine; but we did get to see it and we got to see 3 blocks of the project. Incidentally, it was a beautiful four color rendering of the project, and if I forgot to mention this to all of you that are in the audience and those that maybe watching at home or on a computer, this is being done on a state road, a heavily travelled north/south corridor road. I later learned after the vote was taken, and incidentally the vote was 3-2 to move forward with the project, I later learned after the vote was taken that one, this project never went to the Traffic Advisory Board, they never got to see it and I think we all learned about the same time because I believe that the Chairperson from the Traffic Advisory Board sent us an e-mail. Secondly, I had to continue to pursue the Florida Department of Transportation's approval of the process and all I really was able to see was a memorandum from an engineer in the Florida Department of Transportation who said they had no further comments and that the City needed to take the right insurance coverage, and I believe that's where the construction aspect of the project. But really one of the things that got to me was, I spoke to several public safety personnel and did not learn this, but it just did reawakened what I already knew and that is between 7 (a.m.) and 9 (a.m.) and 4 (p.m.) and 6 (p.m.), LeJeune Road is a major thoroughfare for those that travel north and southbound in Miami-Dade County. I also learned that many of our Police and Fire Rescue units use that central or that median section that chevroned or striped and that in fact use it because they can't traverse north/south, south/north and in fact, and I'm sorry to melodramatize this, but I was even told that this could affect response times. The last thing you would want is to have a loved one needing the help of Fire Rescue or Police and not be able to traverse because now they have to deal with 12 islands on a particular stretch of road, and incidentally let's not forget that Segovia is now narrower, which is west of this project, and east of this project is Ponce and that's also narrow, so this is the major thoroughfare for a lot of response calls that are being dispatched, and let's face it, it's a heavily populated area. Huge concern for me from a life-safety standpoint and then I just happen to see my good friend Felix Pardo at the Rotary Club of Coral Gables and we had a chat about this, and I'm going to take the privilege of asking Felix to come up and express his concerns with what he viewed to be part of the design, the limited design aspect of this project. Once again my fellow colleagues, I am only discussing this, I realize that for whatever reason you chose to move forward and you chose not to bring this back, I know how it works around here, we move forward, the five of us move forward, but I thought that this was important enough to discuss it

in a public setting and bring up the things that maybe you didn't know about. So Felix, good morning, thank you for joining us.

Mr. Felix Pardo: Good afternoon Commissioner.

Commissioner Cabrera: Good afternoon, I apologize.

Mr. Felix Pardo: Thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss something that I think is a life-safety issue. For the record my name is Felix Pardo, my home address is 421 Cadima Avenue here in Coral Gables. Several years ago when FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) was thinking of redesigning LeJeune Road and actually limiting access up and down the corridor on the north/south corridor of LeJeune Road, we had a very good due process where we had neighbors that were advised of this. DOT came out, we met at the Youth Center, we met in several other places, and the bottom line was that, that project was nixed for several reasons, but safety was the number one concern. Also the alterations of patterns was an issue, because if you notice that the streets on east and west of LeJeune Road are not aligned, they were platted like that when Coral Gables was originally designed. So because of that staggering effect you have very short blocks that are staggered slightly but critically, and then what happens is that we have all of the traffic in Miami-Dade County going in the morning from west to east and in the afternoon from east to west. After living at my home for over 22 years, I have seen fatalities on LeJeune Road. In fact, I saw a young man that lived behind us one house over, he was T-boned by a Metro-Dade bus, he was air lifted from the Youth Center where the helicopter...he died on the way to the hospital. The problem is that people go up and down LeJeune Road at 50, 60 miles per hour on a daily basis. When law enforcement goes out to ticket cars, they don't even stop cars that are going 40 to 50, they stop cars that are going over 50 miles an hour. This is a daily occurrence. So what happens is that this lane, this turning lane, this chevron lane that runs up and down LeJeune Road is actually a safety feature. In other words people look left, they look right, when they look right again when they are pulling out all of a sudden they basically becomes a safe haven for them to stop and be able to try to merge into that lane going in that direction. I see it every single day; I see it in the morning, I see it in the afternoon, and I see it in the evening; and in fact in some of these chevron areas, which are just south of the commercial area here, you also see people actually turning in from the commercial area stopping in that area. This is just a normal, it's a normal safety thing that most people do, and the problem is that when you alter this you limit that safety area. So from a life-safety standpoint this is something that seems trivial, but when you see someone gets killed it is not trivial. The amount of accidents are absolutely staggering and the problem is that the speed on LeJeune Road is completely different than on Ponce. Ponce has a traffic light almost every single block, Ponce has the medians there, the speed is 30 miles an hour, the blocks are short, but because of all the traffic lights people can't speed up. The problem that you have on LeJeune Road is completely different, it is the

major thoroughfare from and to Miami International Airport; and the other thing is that when traffic is congested because it is a level "F" road according to DOT, which is the worst of all traffic conditions possible, when you have a level "F" in the afternoon from 4 to 6 o'clock with school zones off Coral Gables High School, you have cars that are backed up both lanes for more than a mile and the problem becomes then for emergency vehicles to be able to respond to the residential areas. So I really – I know that this thing went in why didn't I speak before?- to be quite honest it was not advertised the way that the previous commitment was advertised, I'm not saying that anything was done clandestinely or wrong, but the point is that I received phone calls from my neighbors, they could not believe that this thing had come up. Obviously, it's a different plan, but the point is that it does affect life safety, if this were not that important I would not be here before this Commission, and I would like for the three of you that did vote for it, reconsider it, because let me tell you something, it is pretty traumatic to see the accidents, the speed, the violence of those collisions on that road, and if it wasn't dangerous you know, I wouldn't care. This is not – the beautification component of the LeJeune Road corridor is not important enough in my opinion, and I'm a hundred percent for aesthetics, but it is not that important to compromise life safety. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I've got a question. Felix is a very good friend of mine and Felix actually called me on this issue and we had a discussion and actually I was expecting a phone call back from you because you were going to call FDOT...

Mr. Pardo: I did.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK, maybe you should tell me....

Mr. Pardo: Well, I'll tell you; and to be quite honest, I didn't call the Manager, I saw Ralph there and I didn't quite let him have it, but....

Commissioner Cabrera: You did.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You let me have it.

Mr. Pardo:...I let you have it, Billy; I always let you have it...

Commissioner Cabrera: You don't discriminate.

Mr. Pardo: And the whole point is because the article that came out in the paper that day didn't show a plan, didn't show the extent, so all the neighbors that called me, I had over 50 phone calls

and the neighbors that called me are saying, why are they trying to do the same plan that we overwhelmingly did not want?

Mayor Cason: Is it the same plan?

Commissioner Cabrera: No.

Mr. Pardo: No, it was not, it was not.

Commissioner Cabrera: And I never intended for....

Mr. Pardo: Exactly, it was not. Just so you know Mayor, the problem was that with the original one there was a truncating of LeJeune Road where it was going to be a tremendous mess, so you were going to have openings like almost every 3 or 4 or 5 blocks, so therefore these little residential streets that have already cross through traffic were going to get bombarded – the ones that stayed open and it was actually going to be even more dangerous, but in this particular case because there was not a plan I asked Ralph first, and I said, you know you’ve got to be kidding, he didn’t know what the plan was. Then I called Bill and he said the same thing, I didn’t see the plan, I thought DOT approved it. So I called Gus Pago and the last....

Commissioner Cabrera: Tell them who Gus Pago is.

Mr. Pardo: Gus Pago is the Director of District 6, DOT, he is a good friend of mine and someone that listens when I call because I usually call when there is a life safety concern; and before him the previous plan was Johnny Martinez, he and I grew up together, he is the City Manager over in Miami, but he was the head of District 6, and when we discussed the first plan they aired it out and the citizens all came out and they talked about this, so there was a lack of knowledge on his part being the Director of District 6, he was totally unaware of the thing, and he said, you know you caught me completely cold; but the nice thing is he said immediately, don’t worry, we are not going to compromise life safety in any way, shape or form, and that’s why I needed to understand. I talked to two Commissioners, they don’t really know what the plan is, they understand about that “hairy in the middle” and every time a President comes down they go down LeJeune Road, the motorcade goes right down the middle of that street. Every time there is life safety components that is a major corridor for Fire Rescue for the Fire Department and the Police Department. So it’s really important in my opinion, it’s really important that you really think carefully about that, and I’ll tell you why. The problem that we have is the loading of the corridor running north and south there, those lanes get backed up.

Commissioner Cabrera: Well a perfect example of that, if I may interrupt you is north of Southwest 8th Street on LeJeune Road, what happens there?

Mr. Pardo: Absolutely.

Commissioner Cabrera: Because you have...

Mr. Pardo: And that is a regret that – and Johnny Martinez predecessor who is now the Director of MIA and then he became the DOT Director for the entire State of Florida, you know Jose Abrego, he regretted that and that was a limitation and that was limitation they were trying to impose on....the problem is when there is an emergency and you have a median, you see it anywhere in the County and especially near hospitals, you have a real problem, those guys are leaning on the horn and they can't jump the curbs with those big trucks, they can't, the tires are big, but the weight is too much, and they can't and sometimes seconds makes the difference with responding to something or taking someone. This is a very real situation.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask....

Commissioner Anderson: I ask another question too.

Commissioner Cabrera: I'm still in presentation, but that's OK.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: [Inaudible]

Mr. Pardo: DOT – there are certain types of permits and DOT they review certain applications in a certain way, this is a very minor application to DOT. So when they went through – this didn't get to the Director, the other project went to the Director, the Assistant Director, they said let's call out all the neighbors, let's advertise, let's put it in the paper, and that was different, but the problem is they don't realize until someone brings it to their attention, and I just had a very like conversation – Gus was kind to call me at 8 o'clock at night at home because he was up in Tallahassee, and he said look, this is a real issue, and I didn't realize this, I am going to look in with my department, but the key concern with DOT is not to move cars, it's to move cars safely, and emergency vehicles safely.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: As we had talked they should be our safeguard in this particular case.

Mr. Pardo: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: This is really our safeguard. From my standpoint, I like beautification, you and I have talked about this on numerous occasions and actually I ran across Tim Plummer yesterday, I asked him a question, he said this is a legitimate thing, you have no problems with that whatsoever, that caught me by somewhat of a surprise after you and I talked, Tim Plummer a traffic consultant; but the real safeguard is what I wanted to know is DOT; if DOT says no, we shouldn't be doing this project, I mean there is no way. If they say no – I know their approval process is supposedly very difficult, but if they can intercede and say no, I'm not for it.

Mr. Pardo: Bill, I have dealt with that process so many times, let me tell you; the City could go in for a driveway cut, the City could go in with this or that and they don't necessarily analyze it from a safety standpoint based on the type of permit. So what you have to be careful with is, look at the big picture, I just want you to be aware that if you look at the big picture you are going to understand and the only thing you have to do is just go out there and stand on the sidewalk and you watch people trying to just inch over so they don't get T-boned or go over so they don't get broadsided and that is – it happens every single work week day.

Mayor Cason: I'd like to ask if our Police and Fire have weighed in on this?

Commissioner Anderson: No, actually they didn't.

Mayor Cason: Well I'm asking him....what's their view?

City Manager Salerno: Let me...

Commissioner Cabrera: Wait a minute, wait a minute, this is my item, I haven't finished my presentation, I'm sorry, but I appreciate the fact that we are going to have the Police tell me....

Mayor Cason: Continue then.

Commissioner Cabrera: Thank you, thank you. Felix, first and foremost thank you for being here this afternoon, I know you endured the issue with the COLA and you left and you came back, it's important that the audience understand the contributions you made to the City over the years. You have served on the Historic Preservation Board, you have served on the Board of Architects, we served together on the Planning Board, I learned many, many things from you, I'm very appreciative of that, you helped write the Mediterranean bonus...

Mr. Pardo: Mediterranean Ordinance.

Commissioner Cabrera:...the ordinance, the actual ordinance, which includes the bonuses that's why your forehead is so large today.

Mr. Pardo: So you guys know historically the reason bonuses were added was because it cost that much more to build like that, that's why they were added.

Commissioner Cabrera: The point here is that I appreciate the fact that you took time from your day and you are a great fellow Rotarian to come out here and to make these points. You know what happens here now?- it's up to three people if they want to reconsider this. If they don't, then we are going to move forward, but it's important that I now summarize my points, because I know the City Manager will now have the opportunity to minimize some of the issues that I have with this project.

Mr. Pardo: And I want to just bring one last point up – and by the way, I didn't sit on the Historic Board, I sat twice on the Board of Adjustment, never had the pleasure. The point is that we just moved in HBO over at the 396 Building, and I was the Project Manager on that. Its 69,000 square feet, they've got almost 300 employees; when they go into their parking structure there, they back out onto LeJeune Road, that's one of the areas where you have chevrons right now, and people also use that area there as a safe haven. So it doesn't matter whether you live there or you work there, that thing is a buffer and remembers that the blocks are not lengthwise they are...

Commissioner Cabrera: Angle – chevron – angle.

Mr. Pardo:...the short end is what butts up against LeJeune Road, so you intersection upon intersection, upon intersection, so they go out and they stop and it's because of the speed, so it affects your corporate citizens and your residential citizens too.

Commissioner Cabrera: Thanks – thanks Felix. Let me just summarize real quickly and I misspoke – the total cost of this project is not \$308,000, it's \$305,635, so I want to correct myself before I'm corrected; and I will say though that all of the monies for this project are coming from reserves no matter how you slice it, you cut it, you dice it, it's coming from reserves that have been transferred for the purposes of this project. As I said before, I think this project lacked a true public process. I myself have only seen 10 percent of this project and that's only because Commissioner Quesada requested to see the project and the design, and we got a design element that was, as I said eight and-a-half by fourteen (8 ½ x 14) four color, and incidentally it's called Option 3, so I don't know what Option 1 or 2 yielded. The Traffic Advisory Board of the City of Coral Gables never saw this that no one can deny; the City's Traffic Advisory Board who incidentally has requested any changes to any roadways that could

impede Fire Rescue or Police from response times, they wanted to see it, they never saw it. We've never talked about the additional expense associated with the maintenance of this project; we don't know what it's going to cost to maintain it. I can't tell you how important the fact that potentially we are going to extend response times by our public safety units and I know Chief Masington is here to tell me about this, and I'm hopeful that at least one of you may be willing to reconsider the project, and if not as Mrs. Anderson said a few minutes ago, we'll just move on.

Mr. Pardo: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners thank you for your time.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Cabrera: Felix, I really appreciate it, thank you.

Commissioner Quesada: I don't have any questions; I just want to say it's been too long, thank you for your service to the City. When I was voting on this it was my understanding that the FDOT approvals and that this was not something that was going to affect traffic in a negative way...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's why we voted on it.

Commissioner Quesada:...the Traffic Board, because it wasn't something like a diverter or we weren't putting a circle, you know this was decorative in areas where cars weren't allowed to be in the first place, but I would like to hear now since the issue has come up again, I would like to hear what Police and Fire's input was on this.

Commissioner Cabrera: Absolutely.

Mayor Cason: And the DOT, did they look at the safety angle when they made the approval?- and was the approval at the normal level or is it...?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Circumventing the process.

City Manager Salerno: Let me provide some additional information. First of all to clarify, Options 1, 2, and 3 on the plans only refer to landscaping options, it doesn't affect design, it's why it wasn't relevant, it just talked about whether it had flowers in the middle, brick pavers in the middle, etc. that's all it referred to, and that's why...

Commissioner Cabrera: That's a good clarification – thanks.

City Manager Salerno: As mentioned this is a road controlled by the State DOT, and pretty much the State DOT has the reputation for being the most rigorous entity as far as when you want to work on their roadways. They are extremely detailed and focused and the process by which this approval took place, I'm just estimating it, it took about six months to go through and I think some people described it as a much smaller project, in fact I think somebody said it was tiny or something in that regard, but tiny took six months to get through the State Department of Transportation. Mr. Pardo mentioned that, first of all as stated at the meeting there is no access being restricted on any part of this project, OK, let's restate that no access is being restricted in any way with the design of these medians.

Commissioner Cabrera: No turning access.

City Manager Salerno: It was reported that somehow the little – today those center asphalt medians serve as a safety feature, OK, and I know Felix is an accomplished architect, but from a traffic enforcement and a traffic planning perspective those are not safety islands, in fact they are dangerous, it is illegal to pull out and stop in the middle of those islands, and that's not me saying it, that is statements from the traffic planners that we've had review this item. So you are not supposed to pull out from a side street and sit in the middle of that island. Obviously, there is always the propensity, different driving skills for people to leave the rear end of their car or the nose of their car sticking out into travel, and that is why you are not supposed to do it. So you are not supposed to pull out until you can see your way fully clear of making the traffic movement and entering the lane. Otherwise, if you do so you can actually be cited, you can get a traffic citation if you do what Mr. Pardo suggested would be a safety measure, OK?- cannot do that. FDOT basically tells you what they will allow you to design and you design to their specs. The engineering firm 3CTS designed the project with DOT's guidance, their traffic engineering people led the way, they considered public safety and all other aspects of the design feature.

Mayor Cason: Is that something they are required to do?

City Manager Salerno: It's something they do as in fact normal design engineers and they are traffic engineers, it's a natural process. DOT in their approval process actually reviewed the accident experience on LeJeune Road for a three-year period, and over that three-year period I was told by the project engineer at 3CTS that in three years they've been a total of 20 accidents over that time frame. The majority are rear ends, people rear ending another car. So 12 out of the 20 and then there was a variety of other, but that's the number one accident caused on LeJeune is running into the back of another vehicle. We asked – I asked – the discussions with the Fire Chief was that they were not supportive years ago of the City doing that complete median, because it would cut off access to the side streets.

Commissioner Cabrera: To the previous design.

City Manager Salerno: The previous design, 7 years, 8 years whatever the timeframe was, they were not supportive of that, in fact they suggested the way he presented it to me, they presented an alternative which he says this design is actually better than the one they proposed, OK? In fact, there is no question that LeJeune backs up; today they avoid LeJeune, they don't go down LeJeune during peak hours because they don't want to be tied up in that. They use alternate roadways and principally they use Salzedo, and he said, I asked him specifically what does he think of this design?- and he told me he was totally fine with it and it was better than they had suggested years ago as the way to approach it. I've had discussions with the Police Chief about the same matter and he indicates to me that he is perfectly fine with this improvement, and let me just ask – we went a third step because you know that's the way I am, if somebody questions something I want to make sure we are proceeding in a correct path, so I asked Tim Plummer who is not the design architect on the project, he is not the regulatory agency on the project, but I wanted an independent eye, somebody who knows the City intimately well, maybe the most knowledgeable traffic engineer in the City to take a third independent look on this project. Tim would you step up?

Commissioner Anderson: May I ask a question in the interim? Did it go to the Traffic Advisory Board?

City Manager Salerno: No.

Commissioner Cabrera: No, that's not going to be brought up; we are going to listen to Tim now.

Commissioner Anderson: I just wanted a yes or a no that's all.

City Manager Salerno: No, it did not. I think as, I can't give you the specifics, but I think in part it had been discussed by various folks that were involved in it and I think as the Commissioner described it, it was viewed largely as a beautification project and it went to the Landscape Advisory Board, but Tim please if you would describe your review of the project. He's driven it, he's analyzed it, studied it. I just want to paraphrase for the moment, you believe and you've transmitted to me that in many ways this improves traffic flow and safety. So would you just feel free to discuss it?

Mr. Tim Plummer: Tim Plummer, 1750 Ponce here in Coral Gables. Mr. Mayor, Commissioners appreciate being here today, the City Manager did ask me to take a look at the plans and I reviewed the plans that has been approved by FDOT and were designed by 3CTS to give an

opinion on the safety factors involved with these short medians on LeJeune Road. I did take a look, I analyzed them, I know the area quite well. As many of you know I've grown up here and know many, many of the traffic issues as you all do in this City. What I find with the medians they do a couple of things: one is, they help to better channelize traffic flow on LeJeune Road, which I think is very important; and two, I think they do improve safety from the standpoint of illegal maneuvers are made today, kind of like were described by Mr. Pardo, but the left hand turns, people cannot make the complete turn, so they wait on top of those painted medians till they can get the gap in the other direction and then make the maneuver, and that's not how it should happen. The more safe approach to that is you have to wait until you have a gap both northbound and southbound to make those left hand turns. Now as we all know we've got a lot of congestion in this County and in this City. I have a very similar situation near where I live on Anderson and Coral Way, and I'm constantly going, as you all know to the Youth Center and other places, and what I do is I try to avoid that left turn from Anderson eastbound onto to Coral Way, and I go back around the Granada Golf Course and I go on North Greenway and I use the roundabout to make the maneuver. The neighbors on LeJeune if they were me, and where my kids, I've got kids that drive now a-days, what I advise them on those kinds of situations, what I would advise those neighbors is to go to University if you are trying to go north on LeJeune use the signal at University and LeJeune that's your safest movement as opposed to waiting for that gap because it can be quite difficult and people lose their patients and go halfway out and that's a very dangerous maneuver. By having these curbed islands, these small medians in those locations drivers aren't going to be able to do that any longer, so I think it makes it a safer condition. One of the other medians I noted to on the very north end by Mendoza is that mid block pedestrian crossing and that's also got a very nice pedestrian safety feature to it as well, because as you see sometimes people cross LeJeune, Ponce wherever they are, they stop half way and they have no protection, now they still have a pedestrian refuge on LeJeune there if they don't make it all the way across.

Mayor Cason: With chevrons also you can have two people trying to get in at the same time.

Mr. Plummer: That's correct.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: One other question Tim. FDOT – they looked at this I'm sure, how tough is it to get their approval of this a median on their street?

Mr. Plummer: Dade County is tough, FDOT is much tougher to get approval, they always take into account safety and operations on their roadways or they don't approve things, so I'm sure it was a challenge for 3CTS to get the project approved because all of them are tough with FDOT.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And there is no way you are doing anything to the road without their strict approval on it.

Mr. Plummer: You have to get a permit in order to do any kind of construction on LeJeune.

Mayor Cason: Any other discussion on this?

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes, we are going to bring the Chief of Police now up, so he can minimize the discussion about the median being used for response calls.

Police Chief Masington: Good afternoon everybody.

Commissioner Cabrera: Let me ask you this, did you get the opportunity to review this project before it came to the City Commission?

Police Chief Masington: Before it came to the Commission...

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes sir, before it came to the Commission.

Police Chief Masington: This time?

Commissioner Cabrera: No sir. I know this time, I know this time you got called.

Police Chief Masington: No, I did not.

Commissioner Cabrera: So you never saw this prior to this?

Police Chief Masington: Correct.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK.

Police Chief Masington: I'd like to have recollections of the design years ago where there were going to be really lengthy medians and we all had concerns in those days, and I too had discussions with Mr. Plummer who I've worked with over the years many times; and we've all driven as emergency vehicle operators really in a perspective of whatever opportunities present themselves to us to get where we need to go, and we've done some things that maybe we should or maybe we shouldn't, but in good faith I don't know I would quantify or determine how we would know that this median design changed our response times, probably more for Police than Fire would be abstract because we don't really come from centralized locations, so it would be

very hard to say this response to this call is delayed because the patrol car couldn't get one direction or another on LeJeune Road. We are challenged on other roads too, whether it's U.S.-1 it has a median or Ponce or Segovia now, so they face similar challenges. I always reflect on one change; there have been a lot of roadway modifications in my career, one I reflect on a lot is University Drive you can no longer go south on Salzedo Street, it's a "do not enter", we used to use that all the time, so we've had to change the way that we respond, so we figure it out and I don't know how I would really figure out if our response times would change because of this, that's the best faith response.

Commissioner Cabrera: Hey Chief, I appreciate your candor, it's quite alright. I'm good.

Mayor Cason: I'm going to...

Commissioner Cabrera: It's still my item. I was going to ask, Frank do you have any appetite to bring this back?

Commissioner Quesada: No.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK – then at this time I wish to end the discussion on this item.

Mayor Cason: I want to thank you though for bringing it up because if it had been a security issue, if we had heard today that there were....

Commissioner Cabrera: Hey Jim, it's my job to provide oversight, it's not my job to rubberstamp, OK?- and I never suggest you rubberstamp anything, but others may.

Mayor Cason: I'm glad you raised the safety issue and I think from my opinion it's been discussed.

Commissioner Cabrera: Thank you Jim.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

[End: 2:00:42 p.m.]